

Poems by W. B. Yeats, Rostrevor and Chapman

By CONSTANCE MURRAY GREENE

THE general character of *The Wild Swans at Coole*, forty poems by William Butler Yeats, is perhaps best indicated by the closing lines of *Broken Dreams*:

"From dream to dream and rhyme to rhyme I have ranged
In rambling talk with an image of air;
Vague memories, nothing but memories."

If the poet had a little of the forward look he might not so lament the hoariness of his heart now that he has come to fifty years; indeed he might be almost as young as his father, who could never mourn:

"I thought no more was needed
Youth to prolong
Than dumbbell and foil
To keep the body young.
Oh, who could have foretold
That the heart grows old?"

Notwithstanding the blight of age, this dove colored volume betrays much of Yeats's early buoyancy and that eerie Celtic charm—those swift sidelong glances that are so surprising in their sudden revelation, as in the poem of *Minna Loushe*, the cat, creeping through the grass and looking with his changing eyes at the changing moon. To whom else would the poetry of this subtle kinship have appealed so delicately? The quaint individualism of his work is shown to the best advantage in *Two Songs of a Fool*, unfortunately overlong to quote. We have substituted *Another Song of a Fool*:

"This great purple butterfly,
In the prison of my hands,
Has a learning in his eye
Not a poor fool understands."

"Once he lived a schoolmaster
With a stark denying look,
A string of scholars went in fear
Of his great birch and his great book."

"Like the clangour of a bell,
Sweet and harsh, harsh and sweet,
That is how he learnt so well
To take the roses for his meat."

Onlookers cannot keep from wondering what is to become of the swift, increasing procession of the poets, especially these tenderly young poets of burgeoning promise. Will, for instance, the pretty, slender gift revealed in George Rostrevor's *Escape and Fantasy* expand into some really notable performance? It seems strange to find in this book no echo of conflict since the writer is one of that youthful group of poets whose work has been brought forward by the war. The serenity seems indeed at such a time almost cold, although we are not ungrateful for the restfulness of cuckoo flowers and buttercups and blackbirds, and such a tranquil lyric as *Lotus Eaters*.

There is an unusual variety of theme and treatment in *Songs and Poems* by John Jay Chapman, ranging from the hearty and colorful songs of the opening pages to such a splendid prophetic threnody as *Heroes*. Even more remarkable prophecy is found in the striking poem on the death of Bismarck, first published in 1898. The apparent unawareness of the newer aggressive school of poets and their scorn of classic ideals is fine, and yet it would be interesting to see what such a flexible versifier would do with the polyphonic prose medium. Unusual depth of thought and feeling is shown in the patriotic odes and in more intimate tributes such as this sonnet *To a Dog*:

"Past happiness dissolves. It fades away,
Ghostlike, in that dim attic of the mind
To which the dreams of childhood are
consigned."

Here, withered garlands hang in slow decay,

And trophies glimmer in the dying ray
Of stars that once with heavenly glory
shined.

But you, old friend, are you still left
behind

To tell the nearness of life's yesterday?
Ah, boon companion of my vanished boy,
For you he lives; in every sylvan walk
He waits; and you expect him everywhere.
How would you stir, what cries, what
bounds of joy,

If but his voice were heard in casual talk,
If but his footsteps sounded on the stair!"

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE. By W. B. YEATS. The Macmillan Company. \$1.25.
ESCAPE AND FANTASY. By GEORGE ROSTREVOR. The Macmillan Company. \$1.
SONGS AND POEMS. By JOHN JAY CHAPMAN. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.

"The Pelicans"



E. M. DELAFIELD

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER declares that Miss E. M. Delafield, the author of *The Pelicans*, is a valuable addition to that number, always small, whose books ornament equally the drawing room table and the preference of undisturbed private hours. We question the possibility of *The Pelicans* ornamenting the tables of Catholic drawing room tables or of giving their owners undisturbed private hours, dealing

as it does with the proselytizing of a young Protestant girl and her final induction into a nunnery. The conversion is gone into step by step. We can only hope that Miss Delafield knows her ground better than we do. If there are flaws and untruths in what she has written, death will be none too stiff a penalty in the eyes of those she has offended. A woman who chooses to tramp heavily over the ground most sacred to Catholics and most dangerous to Protestants, of whose number she

undoubtedly is, should be well armed before she makes her start.

Aside from the misery which such religious discussion as Miss Delafield's necessarily involves, into which we do not choose to enter, loving life as cowards will, her new novel is one which will give much pleasure. Her power lies in depicting small things so loyally and amusingly that before we know it her characterization of life and people is upon us and she has succeeded in making a big novel. We are tremendously "intrigued," as all true critics are expressing it this spring, by the chief pelican, Bertha Tregaskis, who is made such a queer combination of odious self-righteousness and unexpectedly lovable traits as to keep us undecided until the book is almost done. There are three pelicans and five young in this story, and from them all has been omitted the priceless quality of humor as nearly as possible, the better to exhibit the author's own humor we are forced to believe. She does this so well that we should never have noticed the lack in her characters if she had not drawn attention to it herself in several cases. It is this rather subtle manner of dealing with dull people that leaves us with the impression of having been vastly amused by a book which is in reality a chain of tragedies. It will be noticed that whenever possible the love making goes on behind the scenes, and that romance interests Miss Delafield not at all, all of which goes to prove that she is as unusual as she is entertaining.

THE PELICANS. By E. M. DELAFIELD. Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.75.

THE author of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* has been arrested thirty times and has served prison sentences which the Spanish authorities hoped would result in an improvement of his style—not as a novelist, but as an editorial writer again the Government. In the *Valentian Tales*, which Ibañez includes in the volume with his novel *Luna Benamor*, to be published by John W. Lucas & Company of Boston, April 19, is one of Ibañez's prison experiences in which a friend, a burglar, tells of an unintentional kidnapping. The atmosphere of the jail which Ibañez paints contrasts sharply with that of cosmopolitan Gibraltar, the scene of *Luna Benamor*, which is a love story.

Those who read that splendid piece of reporting, *Unchained Russia*, by Charles Edward Russell, will be glad to know that his new book, *Bolshevism and Our United States*, is announced by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

GREAT BOOKS for THESE DAYS

JELlicoe

GIBBS

MAURICE

EGAN

THE GRAND FLEET, 1914-1916: Its Creation, Development and Work. By ADMIRAL VISCOUNT JELlicoe OF SCAPA. A book which by its intimate revelations has given the world a controversy for years to come. Sensational in the best sense of the word, it shows how near the Allied Fleet came to defeat, by what marvelous front Germany's naval experts were bluffed. History and romance in one.

With charts, plans and illustrations. Octavo. Net, \$5.00

THE WAY TO VICTORY, by PHILIP GIBBS, author of "The Soul of the War." In two volumes: Vol. I, The Menace; Vol. II, The Repulse. The concluding volumes of a story of the war by America's favorite war writer. "Characteristic of his writing is keen perception of the purely human values. That and his descriptive power go far to explain his great popularity."—Boston Herald. Mr. Gibbs has given us unsurpassed pictures that will remain the most vivid and fascinating of war records.

Two volumes. With maps. Octavo. Net, \$5.00

FORTY DAYS IN 1914, by MAJOR GENERAL SIR F. MAURICE. England's foremost military critic recounts in this book the first official story of the German failure before Paris. A narrative of lasting value by the one man who knew it best and was in charge of the British divisions. The first authoritative answer to a military riddle that has puzzled the experts and the world.

With maps and charts. Octavo. Net, \$2.00

TEN YEARS NEAR THE GERMAN FRONTIER, by MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN, late U. S. Minister to Denmark. "Brilliant and most entertaining."—Philadelphia Public Ledger. "One of the most authentically informing books of the kind we have read for many a day."—New York Tribune. A book of immediate bearing on many of the problems now before the Peace Conference.

Illustrated. Net, \$3.00



GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY, Publishers, NEW YORK
PUBLISHERS IN AMERICA FOR HODDER & STOUGHTON